

Mother Tongue Maintenance and Second Language Sustenance: A Two-Way Language Teaching Method

Ahlam Al-Harbi
Taif University, Saudi Arabia

TESOL Journal
Vol. 2, pp. 144-158
©2010
<http://www.tesol-journal.com>



Abstract

Language Class should invest in teaching not only the grammar of a second language but it should be concerned with preserving and refining the grammar of the mother tongue as well. Focusing on the different aspects of the second language may result in the students' losing interest in the mother tongue, having difficulty translating the meanings of L2 words into the mother tongue, and ignorance of the fact that similar language rules and aspects to accelerate the acquisition of the second language. This paper suggests a method to teach explicit grammar through mother tongue grammar transformation (MTGT). This study has outlined the basic method and assumptions underlying MTGT from the point of view of a practitioner and from that of a language learner. By means of comparison, a second language learner might be able to learn the grammar of the second language and continue to develop that of the mother tongue simultaneously. The idea for this research project stems from the researcher's observations that many times L2 learners do not seem to adequately learn the grammar taught in the second language class without comparing it to the grammar of their own mother tongue.

Keywords: Mother tongue, Second language, Adult Language learners, and Mother Tongue Grammar Transformation (MTGT).

Introduction

By definition, the mother tongue (L1) is learned first and a second language (L2) is learned later on in life. Research has shown that adult L2 learners do not acquire a new language as children usually do. Unlike young children who pick up their first language naturally in a cultural and linguistic environment, those who learn a second language after the critical period learn their second language at a later time and sometimes in isolation from the appropriate cultural-linguistic environment. Richard-Amato (1996) believes that learners "construct language from prior conceptual knowledge and develop language in predictable stages" (qtd. in Zhonggang Goa, 20001, p.1). Yet, she (1996) thinks that L2 learners are supposed to be more developed cognitively and linguistically, because of their prior knowledge, which enables them to use their analytical powers in learning a new language (qtd. in Zhonggang Goa, 20001, p. 27). Keeves and Darmawan (2007) think that it is "highly desirable that an adequate level of competence in the learning of the mother tongue (L1) is achieved before any formal learning of a second language takes place through classroom instruction" (p.20). Based on the developments in the field of second language acquisition, researches have refocused attention on the influence of L1. The purpose of the Gass and Selinker (1983) collection of papers was to disclose that "there is overwhelming evidence that language transfer is indeed a

real and central phenomenon that must be considered in any full account of the second language acquisition process." (p. 7). Based on the growing body of evidence, it is believed that learners "with a strong mother tongue, and those who continue to develop, are far more successful in learning and functioning in another target language" (ISPP, 2009). Research has proved that many skills acquired in the first language can be transferred to the second language. Thence, teachers for L2 learners should invest L2 learners' analytical abilities and the other skills of L1 to enable them to learn a new language easily.

The current study suggests a method to teach explicit grammar through using the mother tongue grammar transformation (MTGT) method. The paper outlines the basic method and assumptions underlying the MTGT. By means of comparison, a second language learner might be able to learn the grammar of the second language and further develop that of the mother tongue at the same time. Such maintenance helps to avoid language loss and the resultant negative feelings as well as minimize first language interference or negative transfer. The idea of this research project stemmed from the researcher's observations that many times L2 learners do not seem to adequately learn the grammar taught in class without comparing it to the grammar of their mother tongue which is, after all, their only point of reference.

First Language Role in Second Language Acquisition

The issue of first language interference has had a long history in second language acquisition studies. Endless amounts of extensive research have already been carried out to study first language interference and its effects on the process of learning a second language. It has been argued that "the transfer of patterns from the native language is undoubtedly one of the major sources of errors in learner language" (Lightbown & Spada, 1999, p. 165). Such studies show that one of the factors influencing the learning process is first language interference or negative transfer, which may be defined as "the use of a negative language pattern or rule which leads to an error or inappropriate form in the target language" (Richards, Platt and Platt, 1992, p. 205). Also, Dulay, Burt & Krashen (1982) define interference "as the automatic transfer, due to habit, of the surface structure of the first language onto the surface of the target language" (qtd. in Bhela, 1999, p. 22). In addition, Lott (1983) defines interference as "errors in the learner's use of the foreign language that can be traced back to the mother tongue" (p. 256).

At the same time, Ellis (1997) refers to interference as 'transfer', which he defines as being "the influence that the learner's L1 exerts over the acquisition of an L2" (p. 51). Yet, this transference is governed "by learners' perceptions about what is transferable and by their stage of development in L2 learning" (Bhela, 1999, p. 23). In the process of learning L2, learners are inclined to construct their own interim rules (Selinker, 1971, Seligar, 1988 and Ellis, 1997) using their L1 knowledge, when they know it will help them in the process of learning or "when they have become sufficiently proficient in the L2 for transfer to be possible" (Bhela, 1999, p.23).

Typically, an L2 learner understands a second language partly in terms of the kinds of knowledge already learned in the first language (Carroll, 1964; Albert & Opler, 1978 and Larson-Freeman & Long, 1991). Beebe (1988) claims that in the process of learning a second language, L1 knowledge is grafted on to

L2 knowledge, and together they will fuse into a common set of knowledge.

The relationship (i.e., the similarities and differences) between L1 and L2 must be taken into consideration. Albert and Obler (1978) clarify that L2 learners whose L1 is similar to the target language show more interference than those whose L1 has fewer similar features. Yet, when the possibilities of interference are low this means more learning difficulties, “as the learner would find it difficult to learn and understand a completely new and different usage” (Bhela, 1999, p. 23). Thus, mistakes and errors in performance will result as learners refer to L1 structures for help (Selinker, 1979; Dulay et al, 1982; Blum-Kulka & Levenston, 1983; Faerch & Kasper, 1983, Bialystok, 1990 and Dordick, 1996). Dechert (1983) shows that the more distinct the two languages are structurally, the more likely the instances of errors in L2 that bear traces of L1 structures.

The focus of this study is on specific instances of L1 interference on L2 in the grammatical rules of the second language learners’ learning and acquisition. The present study also identifies the perspective of L2 learners regarding the differences and/or similarities between the grammar of L1 and L2 on the second language as well as the first language. The study concentrates on the assumption that most L2 learners rely on the grammar of L1 to understand that of L2. It also identifies the importance of the learner’s knowledge of the grammar of L1, which may cause difficulty in L2. With this knowledge, L2 learners are made aware of the errors made (or they may make) and how they may be rectified.

Research Questions

The present study is designed to answer the following questions:

1. Do L2 learners compare the grammar of L1 and L2?
2. Is this method helpful for L2 learners to understand the new and similar patterns in L2 and form the new patterns?
3. Is this method helpful for L2 learners to maintain their understanding of L1?

The research scope of this paper is limited to outlining a method, i.e. assumptions and hypotheses, in which first language interference may be invested to explain the patterns of L2, maintain the grammar of L1, and minimize the negative interference of L1, with a focus on grammatical rules.

Mother Tongue Grammar Transformation (MTGT) Method

As it is mentioned above, the topic of “first language interference/transference” has had an unusual history in second language acquisition research and practice. For many years, it had been presumed that the only major source of syntactic errors in L2 learners’ performance was learners’ first language (Lado, 1957). Yet, subsequent extensive empirical studies of errors made by L2 learners led to the findings that many L2 learners’ errors are not traceable to the interference of L1. These errors are common errors done by L2 learners of different linguistic backgrounds at different stages (e.g. Richards, 1971; Buteau, 1970). These studies were the reason to “question the value of contrastive analysis and to argue instead for error analysis” (Krashen, 1981, p. 64). The current study presents a method (MTGT) to support contrastive analysis as a means to teach

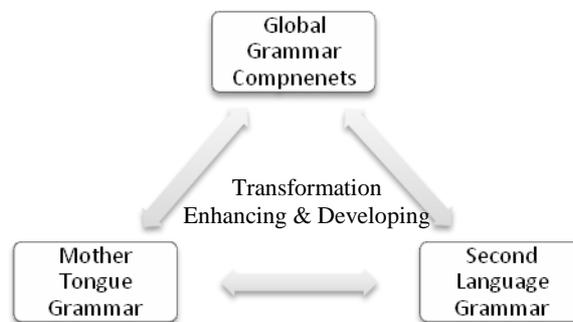
L2 in general and grammar in particular.

This method is different from the well-known grammar translation method in all its aspects. The only similarity is that the grammar is taught explicitly in the class. Unlike the grammar translation method, classes are taught in the second language, with little active use of the first language. Translation is not the basis of this method; it is comparison.

This method is designed for adult L1 beginner/intermediate learners. It is very important for teachers to have knowledge of the grammar of the L1 and the L2 in order to understand and guide first language interference. Teachers who have knowledge of the L1 and the L2 can predict areas and reasons of difficulties, confusion, and mistakes.

L2 learners should be introduced to the main idea of this method, i.e., global grammar (GG). GG is the main assumption which underlines the MTGT method. The basic components of grammar are globally shared among the world languages even if they are completely different (see Fig.1 below). For the purpose of this study, GG will be defined as being the essential grammatical and structural components all languages have in common. L2 learners should be able to identify the similar components for a better understanding of the grammar of L2 and the different meanings of different grammatical structures. The diagram below summarizes the bigger picture of GG illustrating how grammatical components of a language can be used to teach L2 learners those of a second language.

Figure 1
Basic Assumption of the MTGT



To begin with, the components of global grammar are identified below based on Mora's (2003) classification of grammar components with some modifications.

Table 1
Components of GG

Elements of the syntactic construction of the sentence	Elements of the sentence	Parts of speech	Types of sentences	Verb Tense	Moods of the sentence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clauses • Phrases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject • Verb • Direct/indirect object • Complements • Modifiers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articles • Verbs • Nouns • Pronouns • Adjectives • Adverbs • Prepositions • Conjunctions • Interjections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nominal/verbal • Simple • Compound • Complex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present • Past • Future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active voice • Passive voice

Basically, languages share these components in general; yet, these components differ from one language to another. L2 learners should understand this and take it into consideration to avoid making mistakes. Moreover, explaining the rules of one language by using the rules of the other language work as a two way method of maintaining and sustaining both languages. It is very important to clarify that this study does not claim that listing the areas of differences between languages is listing all the linguistic difficulties that will occur. The kind of comparison in this study is done to achieve the following aims:

1. To maintain the first language so learners will understand and appreciate their first language and be able to translate as well.
2. To be able to explain the grammar of the second language and spot the reasons for the mistake when it is related to the first language interference.
3. To enhance L1 knowledge.
4. To achieve a better understanding of L2
5. To utilize the similarity in patterns between L1 and L2.
6. To allow teachers to take part in the process of comparison done by L2 students consciously and unconsciously.
7. To stop undesirable (negative) interference.
8. To focus on forming new patterns and practicing applying them to achieve fluency in the L2.

The table above might help L2 educators to conduct a linguistic review of both languages by using contrastive analysis, i.e., the first and the second language, to identify potential problematic areas and as well as similarities, which differ from one language to another. For example, it is predicted that using the third person singular pronouns ‘he’ and ‘she’ is one of the common sources of errors amongst Chinese learners because of their first language background. For the same reason, Arabic speakers usually have a problem forming sentences where ‘verb to be’ is the main verb. Predictable problems are not limited to grammar only, but speakers of Asian languages may have difficulties producing certain sounds such as “l” and “r” sounds; on the other hand, speakers of Spanish may have difficulties distinguishing between as well as producing “sh” and “ch” sounds. Understanding the differences between

languages may lead learners to a more accurate demonstration of the grammar of both languages. Hopefully, this will lead them to meet high standards and succeed in achieving fluency in their new language.

From the researcher's observations and they are not new concepts, L2 learners use their previous knowledge of L1 as a scale to measure, understand, and acquire L2 especially when they are learning grammar. When it comes to lexicons, some confusion occurs in particular when a word in L1 can be used in different ways while in L2 there are two different words to express the L1 single word; for example, in English we use the verb 'teach' and 'learn' to express two actions and two different agents. However, in some languages such as Arabic, there is only one word that can express these two actions. Speakers can add a prefix to show who does the action. Thus, in English, they are two separate actions; but on the other hand, in Arabic, it is one action. Accordingly, Arab learners often confuse between these two verbs. Also, the word "think" in English could mean 'believe' or 'the process of working the mind to recall knowledge or reason'. Yet, in Arabic, there are two different words to express these two different meanings. Thus, as it is expected, Arabic L2 students of English have some difficulties differentiating between the two different ways of using this word. Brown (2000) says that "in an ESL course for speakers of Arabic, overt attention to targeted syntactic contrasts between Arabic and English reduced error rates" (p. 213). Accordingly, such a difference should be highlighted in order to avoid confusion and mistakes. Usually, L2 learners who make this mistake are not aware of it. Yet, when the difference is explained, they start to correct themselves and monitor their uses of the two verbs in English.

On the mental stage of adult L2 learners, the process of learning is done consciously, unlike young children who learn their language naturally. At this stage, learners should be enforced and encouraged to create new mental patterns that their L1 lacks to enable them to acquire the L2 faster and more accurately. By fostering the process of creating new mental patterns of L2 by means of comparison, learners increase their awareness to achieve fluency faster.

Three main 'hypotheses' constitute the MTGT method based on the researcher's observations as both a practitioner and a language learner. These hypotheses are consistent with the findings from a number of studies on second language acquisition: (1) The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis claims that by contrasting different areas of two languages, the problems that a language learner might encounter can be predicted and avoided (Crystal, 2003; Fries, 1952), (2) cross-linguistic influence shows that prior language experiences always have an effect on the way a second language is learned (Brown, 2000; Wardhaugh, 1970), (3) L2 learners construct a linguistic system that draws, in part, on the learners L1 (Ellis, 1997, p.33).

The Conscious Mental Patterning-Fluency Hypothesis

L2 learners will be more fluent, when they are aware of the similarities and differences between L1 and L2, especially beginner and intermediate learners. If an L2 learner is aware of such aspects, he will work on creating a new mental pattern consciously in order to be able to speak fluently without monitoring their language any more. Adult L2 learners' creating mental patterns

of any language is the only way for them to learn to speak the language fluently, unlike children who do this mental process unconsciously. Thence, comparing L1 and L2 will show how the mental patterns which L1 learners already have are different from those of L2. Realizing how the new mental patterns should be, L2 learners will try to create a new pattern by modifying the one the learners already have. This being the case, it is noticed how it is difficult sometimes to create a completely new mental pattern which learners do not already have. For example, L2 learners whose mother tongue is Arabic often form nominal sentences deleting 'verb to be' when it is the main the verb in an English sentence. This mistake is a result of the nominal structure of Arabic which lacks the existence of a verb. However, when L2 learners are made aware that the English language is different in this aspect and English sentences are always verbal, they start creating and acquiring this new pattern easily, even if it takes a long time. On the other hand, when L2 learners whose L1 is Arabic are taught that the subject comes before the verb in English, which is the opposite of their L1, they learned this pattern very quickly and applied it correctly.

Comparison is only the first step by which L2 learners will understand the patterns they need to create in order to be fluent. The moment the patterns are created, L2 learners will stop comparing the two languages. At this stage, L2 learners will start acquiring the language naturally.

The Learning-Acquisition Process Hypothesis

According to Krashen's (1982) learning-acquisition hypothesis, there are two different ways of adult L2 learners to develop their knowledge of L2, namely acquisition and learning (qtd. in Lightbown & Spada, 1999, p. 38). However, taking the first hypothesis into consideration, literally there are two steps through which adult L2 learners develop and sustain their knowledge of L2, namely learning and then acquisition. For the sake of argument, Krashen (1982) claims that "we acquire as we are exposed to samples of the second language which we understand. This happens in much the same way that children pick up their first language- with no conscious attention to language form" (qtd. in Lightbown & Spada, 1999, p. 38). This researcher believes the result of such exposure is a pidgin language, a language which is based on the structure of another language and "shows only a very poor grammar and a sharply curtailed vocabulary" (Tichacek, 2003, p.6).The majority of L2 learners cannot acquire a second language just by being exposed to it without studying and learning L2. If acquisition happens, it is because of a learning process which took place first where the learner used L1 to understand L2.

Krashen (1982) argues that acquired language leads to fluent communication and learning cannot lead to acquisition (qtd. in Lightbown & Spada, 1999, p. 38). On the contrary, in a second language acquisition, learning happens first and then acquisition which leads to fluency.

Monitoring-Fluency Process Hypothesis

In order to achieve fluency, L2 learners should spend enough time monitoring their use of the second language, in particular the new mental patterns they have created. This monitoring stage may never end, yet it will be minimized greatly by the time L2 learners achieve fluency. Acquisition can only

be achieved after a profound understanding of the second language is reached and the new mental patterns are created. After creating the new patterns, L2 learners will be aware of them, yet mistakes occur because the new patterns are not as strong and influential as those of L1 in the mind of the adult second language learner. Thus, practicing and monitoring these new patterns is encouraged to achieve fluency. L2 learners who do not practice and focus on the new patterns may find using the second language very difficult; accordingly, achieving fluency may not occur even though they created the new patterns needed.

What may make this method attractive to practitioners is that it appears to have immediate implications for classroom practice. Teachers can understand why some learners make certain mistakes which they can minimize by highlighting the differences and similarities between L1 and L2 from the very beginning even before learners make the expected mistakes. Comparison will not prevent them from making such mistakes; yet, they will be able to identify and correct themselves when such errors occur.

Research Methodology

After outlining the proposed method clarifying its basic assumption as well as its hypotheses, this study has carried on a survey questionnaire to examine L2 learner's methods of learning L2 and the approaches they have developed to understand the similar and different patterns of L2. The questionnaire aimed to examine L2 learner's point of view regarding the comparison method between the grammar of L1 and that of L2 and their application of this method in the process of learning English. Then, the assumption and the hypotheses of this method are explained.

Participants

All the contributors to the corpus possess different English proficiency levels (ranging from beginner to advanced English learners) and are of about the same age (all in their twenties). There were sixty-four participants in the study - Saudi male and female students who started learning English in school when they were 13 years old. English is important for these learners as they are either studying English as a second language (which constitutes 90% of the data) or they are living in the second language speaking country (which constitutes 10% of the data).

Tool and Tasks

These L2 learners were given a 25 question survey (see appendix 1) on the comparison method they used to understand the grammatical rules of L2 in order to assist their use of contrastive analysis to understand the new different and similar patterns.

The first three questions are general, they are related to their second language level, their first language and to what extent it is similar/different when it is compared to the second language. The second three questions are related to the areas of difficulty in the second language and what aspects help to be fluent. The third set of three questions is about the acquisition and learning

process of the second language in general. The other fifteen questions are all about the comparison method and how helpful for both understanding the grammatical rules of the second language as well as the first language. The last question asks for further suggestions to foster the process of learning a second language.

Analysis Procedures

The analysis examines the answers of the different questions of the survey taking into consideration the point of view of the learners according to whether they consider their L1 and L2 completely/partially different and the learners' L2 proficiency levels. The questions which count in the analysis are those that are related to the new method introduced by this study.

Results

The L2 learners in this study were assessed before the survey, using a free TOEFL CBT. This test has four typical proficiency levels: advanced, high-intermediate, low-intermediate, and beginner.

Table 2
Proficiency levels of L2

Learners' Proficiency	Advanced	High-Intermediate	Low-Intermediate	Beginner
	6	36	10	6

The questionnaire has aimed to investigate how L2 learners looked at the second language (English) they are learning in comparison of their L1 (Arabic), in order to determine if this will affect the way they will judge the proposed method. Only 44% of the participants have considered their L1 is partially different from L2. Arabic and English are not too distinct, yet more than 55% of the students have regarded their L1 as being completely different from L2. However, their perception of the two languages being completely different has never stopped these students from relying on their L1 to understand L2. More than 79% of them have admitted that comparing the grammatical rules of their L1 helps them to understand the similar rules of the second language and almost 79% have agreed that they learn the grammatical rules faster that are similar to their L1 than the ones that are different. The first step to speak fluently, according to 68% of the participants, was to learn the rules first, acquire the language, and lastly speak it fluently.

The method of comparison which explains the differences between the L1 and the L2 helps to avoid confusion, based on the opinions of 78% of the students who took the survey, avoid making mistakes when the rules of L2 are different from those of L1, as 71% of the participants have stated, as well as help them to understand the grammatical rules of their L1 (which they could not understand) and that constitutes more than 70% of the participants. Almost more than 90% of the participants have considered the method of comparing the grammar of the L1 with the grammar of the L2 helpful for beginners and intermediate learners, whereas only 5% have suggested using this method only with advanced students. The other 5% of the students who took the survey believed that this method is useful with all the levels.

General discussion

This study has provided the main assumption as well as the hypotheses behind the GMGT method supporting it with a view of how second language learners regard this method of teaching. It has also supplied evidence of the conscious and unconscious practices of this method by L2 learners and evidence that this method has proved useful even with people who are advanced. This is clearly shown in the percentage of the participants who use their L1 to help them understand their L2, indicating a direct relationship between the L1 and the L2. In the same way, such language interference helps them to understand their own mother tongue.

The survey carried out by this study has brought enough support for the contention that contrastive analysis can help in sustaining the grammar of the L2 and maintaining that of the L1, through the high percentage of the participants who acknowledged practicing this method even on their own. Comparison seems to be inevitable for L2 learners regardless of their second language level. Each learner seems to have his own methods of teaching himself a second language. However, according to the survey, comparison seems to be a common method shared by most of the learners.

Such a method is a two-edged sword. Comparing the grammar of both languages could be considered interference or transference. Yet, teachers' utilization of interference may turn the negative first language interference into positive transference which learners can benefit from. Learners can use already learned and acquired patterns to help them learn the patterns of the second language.

Conclusion

The proposed method in this study has illustrated how to build language development into grammar lessons. L2 learners must receive the best content instruction possible while they are learning English in class in order to avoid mistakes, understand fully L2, learn how to invest their previous knowledge, and form new patterns to enable them to speak fluently. The proposed method aims at further developing L1 through teaching L2 as well.

In addition, language textbooks and teachers should incorporate L1 rules and patterns in their teaching materials while explaining the L2. Similarly, L2 teachers and educators need to conduct linguistic reviews of L1 and L2 items and identify problematic areas in order to highlight them in class before students make any mistakes as a result of similarities or differences in the two languages. Realizing the problematic areas for certain learners will help to make L2 classes be more rigorous which is vital to accelerate learners' English language development so they can master the required knowledge and fluency that will enable them to meet high standards in a shorter length of time. Furthermore, contrastive analysis may be worth exploring to uncover non-transference patterns which could then be discarded as irrelevant to avoid their application by L2 learners.

There are many challenges to teaching as well as learning a second language grammar; yet, it is a vital area to adult L2 learners' linguistic competence. This research has shed light on the importance of comparison as a

means of understanding the L2 as well as the L1. By incorporating the suggested method and its implications into teaching practice, teachers can help learners gain the skills they need for effective communication in L2.

Acknowledgement

Special thanks to Mrs. Ann Al-Ghoriabi, who provided feedback on an early version of this paper and the questionnaire carried out by this study as well.

References

- Brown, H. D. (2000). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. White Plains, NY: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.
- Crystal, D. (2003). *A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Ellis, R. (1997). *Second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fries, C. (1952). *The structure of English*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World.
- Gass, S., & L. Selinker (eds.) (1983). *Language transfer in language learning*. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House.
- Goodluck, H. (1991). *Language acquisition: A linguistic introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Keeves, J. P., & Darmawan, I. (2007). Issues in language learning. *International Education Journal*, 8(2), 16-26.
- Krashen, S. (1981). *Second language acquisition and second language learning*. New York: Pergamon.
- Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (1999) *How languages are learned*. New York: Oxford.
- Tichacek, K. (2003). The "Critical Period Hypothesis" and Pidgin and creole languages. Retrieved December 31, 2009 from <http://www.duke.edu/~kl41/DATA/CriticalPeriod.pdf>
- Van Els, T., Bongaerts, T., Extra, G., Van Os, C., & Van Dielen, A. (1984). *Applied linguistics and the learning and teaching of foreign languages*. Translated by R. R. van Oirsouw. London: Edward Arnold.
- Wexler, K., & Culicover, P. W. (1980). *Formal principles of language acquisition*. London: The MIT Press.
- Wardhaugh, R. (1970). The contrastive analysis hypothesis. *TESOL Quarterly*, 4(2), 123-130.

Appendices

Survey Questionnaire

Dear Participants,

I am a researcher working on a paper entitled *“Mother Tongue Maintenance and Second Language Sustainance: A Two Way Language Teaching Method”*. I am outlining a method of teaching English grammar by means of comparing the grammar of the first language to that of the second language in order to avoid first language negative interference, invest similar aspects, enhance the understanding of the grammar of the first language and accelerate acquiring the second language. If you do not mind would you please help me evaluate the proposed method in my paper to teach grammar? Your opinion and time are highly valued, and your help is greatly appreciated. Thank you!

1. How do you rate your second language?

- Advanced
- High-Intermediate
- Low-Intermediate
- beginner

2. My first language is different from the second language I am learning.

- Completely
- Partially

3. What is your first language?

4. Which of the following components of grammar is the most challenging in second language learning? (*You may choose more than one*)

- Grammatical components that are similar to that of my language
- Grammatical components that are different from that of my language
- Both
- I has nothing to do with similarities and difference

5. On a scale where “10” means the most important and “1” means the least important, how would you rate the importance of the following aspects of the language that you should learn first in order to be able to speak fluently?

- Grammatical rules
- Vocabulary
- Pronunciation

6. Which aspect of the second language will make you speak fluently?

- Grammar
- Vocabulary
- Don't know

7. Do you think you will acquire the second language better only being exposed to it without formal education?

- Yes

- No
- Don't know

8. Did you try to learn a second language by speaking to the people without studying the rules of the language? If yes, was it helpful?

- Yes
- No
- I have not tried to do so

9. I need a formal education in order to speak a second language

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

10. Students whose first language is similar to the second language learn faster.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

11. How much do you agree with each of the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. If do not compare the grammar of my mother tongue language with that of the second language, I will learn faster.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I learn faster when the grammatical rules are similar to my language.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I learn the rules first then I acquire the language to speak fluently.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Comparing the grammatical rules of my first language helps me understand the similar rules of the second language.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I make mistakes because the grammatical rules of the second language are different from that of my first language.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. I think explaining the grammatical rules of my first language and then showing how the grammatical rules of the second language are different will help me to avoid getting confused.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree

- Strongly disagree

13. What level does this method (comparing the two languages) suit? (You may choose more than one)

- Beginners
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- All
- No level

14. This method of comparison will not help me to avoid making mistakes when the rules of the second language are different from those of my first language.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

15. Comparing the first language and the second language grammar helps me to understand the grammatical rules of my first language (which I could not understand).

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

16. In any case, the first step in using teaching a second language is to examine the first language of the learners.

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

17. Grammatical rules of the second language should be explained in the same way to different learner regardless of the grammatical rules of their first language.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

18. If you (strongly) disagree, how should it be different?

- More detailed
- Accompanied with more examples
- Using the grammatical rule of the first language to show difference
- Other

19. Not mentioning the grammatical rules of the first language will be more helpful

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

20. Put a check mark (✓) next to the areas, where comparison will be helpful:

- Grammar
- Some lexical items
- Idioms
- Sounds

Suggestions to achieve a better method of teaching a second language, please arrange them in points: *(you can use your first language to express your ideas)*

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....